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RUEKDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 6808  
RUEHTRO/USLO TRIPOLI PRIORITY 0080  
RHMFISS/CJTF HOA  
RHMFISS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 ADDIS ABABA 004223

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DEPARTMENT FOR AF/FO, AF/RSA, AF/E, L/DL, IO/UNP, S/P.  
LONDON AND PARIS FOR AFRICA WATCHERS.

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [KPKO](#) [SU](#) [AU](#) [ER](#) [ET](#)

SUBJECT: AU BUREAU DIRECTOR ON U.S.-AU RELATIONS, AU  
SUMMIT, DARFUR

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Classified By: CHARGE D'AFFAIRES A.I. VICKI HUDDLESTON. REASON: 1.4 (B)  
AND (D)

¶1. (C) Summary: The African Union (AU) welcomes plans to enhance U.S.-AU relations and is willing to work with the USG on privileges and immunities for a U.S. Ambassador to the AU, AU Bureau of the Chairperson Director Mamadou Lamine Diallo told PolEconCouns and Poloff December 27. The AU plans to open its own office in Washington early in 2006 and Konare has tapped a former Chadian Foreign Minister for the post of Permanent Advisor for its New York office. Diallo also indicated that despite AU Commission efforts to dissuade Sudanese President Bashir from running for AU Assembly Chairman, some AU member states do not appear to understand the negative impact a Bashir Chairmanship would have on AU credibility. On Darfur, Diallo emphasized the need to apply sustained pressure to reach a political settlement. End summary.

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ENHANCING U.S.-AU RELATIONS  
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¶2. (C) Diallo told PolEconCouns that the AU very much appreciates U.S. plans to nominate a separate Ambassador to the AU. Asked by PolEconCouns whether the new headquarters agreement being negotiated between the AU and the GOE will address privileges and immunities for non-African Ambassadors accredited to the AU, Diallo responded that he would work with the AU Legal Department in that respect. (Note: Although more than 20 non-African Ambassadors are currently accredited to the AU, all are double-hatted as Ambassador to Ethiopia and to the AU. These Ambassadors enjoy privileges and immunities by virtue of their status with the GOE. The USG would be the first to nominate a separate Ambassador to the AU. End note). At PolEconCouns request, Diallo also pledged to work with the Embassy on ensuring the USG secures invitations to events such as the upcoming AU Summit, which are currently given automatically to accredited Embassies only.

13. (C) Diallo said that the AU intends to open its Washington, DC office early in 2006 and that the Legal Department is reviewing privileges and immunities issues. He acknowledged awareness that the OAU office in New York never actually enjoyed diplomatic status in the past and that the President had designated the AU an International Organization in spring 2005. Diallo noted that the AU has yet to select a head for the Washington office, but revealed that the Chairperson has tapped a former Chadian Foreign Minister as Permanent Advisor for the AU office in New York (Comment: AU appointment of a Permanent Advisor in New York would signal increased AU seriousness in coordinating member state positions at the UN. End comment).

14. (C) Referring to successful inaugural U.S.-AU Policy Planning Talks in July 2005, PolEconCouns asked if the Chairperson has considered S/P's invitation to regularize the talks. Diallo commented that twice-yearly talks may be difficult for the short-staffed AU to adhere to, but said the AU would welcome yearly talks in Addis Ababa or Washington between USG officials and the college of AU Commissioners. He also noted that the AU and USG could take advantage of September UNGA meetings to arrange bilateral consultations.

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AU CHAIRMANSHIP - BASHIR STILL LOOMING  
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15. (C) Turning to the upcoming AU Summit, PolEconCouns asked Diallo for current Commission views on Obasanjo's successor as AU Assembly Chairman. Diallo stated that AU Commission Chairperson Konare had made great efforts to dissuade Sudanese President Al-Bashir from running, arguing that it is "not the right time" for a Sudanese chairmanship (Note: Diallo asked that we keep Konare's opposition to a Bashir

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Chairmanship confidential since the Sudanese have accused the Commission of violating impartiality. End note). Diallo (strictly protect) commented that although the AU Commission believes a Bashir chairmanship would be disastrous for AU credibility, some AU member states do not appear to grasp that concept. According to Diallo, there is still "high possibility" that Bashir will win the Assembly chairmanship. Diallo said that East Africa supports Bashir, but also noted that Ethiopia had discouraged Bashir from declaring candidacy. On the possibility of other candidates, Diallo mentioned rumors that Congo-Brazzaville President Sassou Nguesso is a front-runner, but said Nguesso has not officially declared his candidacy.

16. (C) On election mechanics, Diallo said that the Assembly Chairman will be elected by two-thirds majority in a closed session of the Assembly just before the January 23-24 Summit in Khartoum. In reality, though, consensus on the Chair should be known shortly as the AU Commission will need to work with the upcoming Chair to prepare the Summit. Diallo mentioned that Nigeria, Libya, Algeria, Egypt, Senegal, Ghana, Mali, Benin, Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Mauritius and South Africa are the most active AU members, and are therefore the most useful targets for potential U.S. approaches on the issue of succeeding Obasanjo.

17. (C) In a separate meeting, the Nigerian DCM told Poloff that Nigeria had directly informed Bashir that Sudan would not be allowed to host the AU Summit if Bashir were to pursue Assembly Chairmanship. Nigeria firmly believes that a Sudanese Chairmanship is inappropriate while Darfur remains unresolved, he said. According to the Nigerian DCM, Obasanjo is prepared to step down, but wants to ensure a strong successor. Several Addis-based African diplomats have pegged Congo-Brazzaville President Sassou Nguesso as the front runner, but Nigeria may prefer Rwandan President Kagame. The Nigerian DCM commented that Ethiopian PM Meles would be a strong candidate, but said Meles appears too distracted by

internal political issues and the border dispute with Eritrea to declare candidacy. He also lamented that the Tanzanian president is so new, as a candidate from the East would likely triumph over a candidate from the Central region.

¶18. (C) Note: Post is engaging in consultations to prepare a comprehensive scenesetter ahead of the AU Summit. End note.

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DARFUR - RE-HATting TALK DISTRACTS POLITICAL TALKS  
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¶19. (C) On Darfur and the scheduled January 12 Peace and Security Council (PSC) decision to determine the future of AMIS, Diallo said that the AU Commission is still considering the added value of a UN transition. Diallo stated that Konare's own thinking is that the international community must place more pressure on the Sudanese government and the rebel parties to reach a political settlement. Funding issues aside, Diallo noted, the AU questions the UN's ability to perform better than AMIS in the absence of a political deal. Diallo commented that the UN has natural comparative advantage when it comes to resettlement, reconstruction and monitoring. Despite acknowledging that a UN transition would take several months, he voiced AU fear that the Sudanese parties will sideline the AU if too much emphasis is placed on re-hatting and not enough focus is given to securing a political settlement. Diallo expressed confidence that a political settlement is possible, perhaps even prior to the AU Summit, because he assessed that both the government and rebel groups know a military solution is not achievable, and that the Sudanese government is serious about addressing Darfur.

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AU ROLE ON ETHIOPIA-ERITREA  
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¶10. (C) Diallo mentioned that the Ethiopia-Eritrea border issue may be considered during a special Summit session of the Peace and Security Council. According to Diallo, the AU Commission favors calling a meeting of the Witnesses in the near future. PoleconCouns noted that AF DAS Yamamoto plans a trip to Addis the week of January 9, which will provide an opportunity to coordinate efforts. Diallo stated that the AU Commission has so far not placed priority on Algiers Agreement provisions calling for an OAU investigation on the causes of the Ethiopia-Eritrea war. He had no comment on the recent Ethiopia-Eritrea Claims Commission decision finding Eritrea at fault for starting the conflict.

¶11. (U) Minimize considered.

HUDDLESTON